

The Blanchard Forest Strategies Group

Ten members of the Blanchard Forest Strategies Group were selected by Commissioner of Public Lands Doug Sutherland, who leads Washington's Department of Natural Resources (DNR). They come from the local Skagit community—each representing different important values involved with Blanchard, including the county (as a trust beneficiary), recreation interests, conservation groups, land use interests, timber industry, and a representative of DNR.

The Group met periodically during an eight month timeframe. They developed a hard-won set of consensus recommendations for Blanchard Forest and presented them to Sutherland and DNR.

The proposal embraced many benefits: a healthy ecologically diverse forest, revenues for county services and education, contributions to the local timber supply, and recreation opportunities for families. Within this 'working forest,' a roughly 1,600-acre 'core' zone mostly at the top of the mountain would be managed as older forest, with trails and scenic vistas, and links to Larrabee State Park and Samish Bay. The whole forest would offer different non-motorized trail experiences with interpretive educational opportunities as well.

The Group recognized that the State Forest Trust needs full compensation for trust lands placed in the core, and to carry that out in a timely manner. The money would purchase 'in-holdings' and parcels adjacent to Blanchard Forest to maintain the flow of revenue to the beneficiaries that currently receive funding, a feature important to Skagit county.

Eron Berg

Friends of Blanchard

Mike Crawford

Former President, Economic Development Council of Skagit County; Retired Manager/VP Concrete Nor'West

Molly Doran

Skagit Land Trust

Mitch Friedman

Executive Director, Conservation Northwest

Will Hamilton

Consulting Forester; member of the San Juan Preservation Trust

Ken Osborn

Consulting Forester

Mike McGlenn

Back Country Horsemen

Bob Rose

Citizen of Skagit County

Kendra Smith

Natural Resource Lands Policy Coordinator, Skagit County, the predominant beneficiary of trust revenue from Blanchard Forest

Clay Sprague

Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Commissioner of Public Lands

John Howell

*Facilitator for Blanchard Strategies Group meetings,
Cedar River Group, Seattle*